
Words of Truth

This Is Why We Should Not Play The Lottery...

By: Brian A. Yeager

If you search the Scriptures for the word "lottery", you will not find anything. There is no verse telling you to play the lottery. There is no verse telling you not to play the lottery. If you are therefore searching to find out what God's will on this matter is, you are going to have to look a little deeper than a concordance will permit.

As we progress in our study, I am purposing to prove that it is not God's will for us to play the lottery. Much of what we will study will also prove that we should not gamble in others ways also. So, as you consider the Scriptures in this article, understand that these Scriptures will have broader applications than what I will be making.

As we begin our study, we should consider that it is God's intention that we earn our means of living. If one cannot earn his or her way of living, it is permissible to get assistance. We will also see that it is permissible for a person to gain by way of an inheritance. Outside of those means of gain, the Scriptures are silent and thus we MUST be as well (Proverbs 30:5-6, Acts 15:22-24, I Peter 4:11, and II John 9). Thus, let's start our study by proving these three means of obtaining a way of living are acceptable unto God.

God Approves Of These Means Of Obtaining A Way Of Living

First and foremost, we must be a people willing to work to earn a living. Notice the clarity of these Scriptures: *"Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive... Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth... And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing... For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread"* (Acts 20:34-35, Ephesians 4:28, I Thessalonians 4:11-12, and II Thessalonians 3:10-12). The exception here would apply to the wife of a working man (Titus 2:3-5).

Secondly, we can find that God approves of someone who cannot fully fund their living through means of occupation receiving assistance from others. For the sake of clarity, this point would even go as far as authorizing injured people to receive assistance (Luke 10:25-37). Having said that, let's look at

some Scriptures that prove it is acceptable for truly needy people to receive help financially: *“And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul... For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem”* (Acts 11:27-30 and Romans 15:26).

Thirdly, the word of God says: *“A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just”* (Proverbs 13:22). Thus, you have not erred if you inherit money from relatives and are able to live off of those funds. That does not mean you should become a lazy person (Proverbs 18:9, Proverbs 19:15, and Romans 12:11). However, receiving funds through an inheritance is acceptable to God. What you cannot find though is the same line of authority for gaining funds through the lottery or other forms of gambling. What you do find is reasoning that would keep you from gambling.

Scriptural Reasoning That MUST Prevent Lottery Play

With no authority to play the lottery, the subject should already be closed (Colossians 3:17). With clear authority for how we should obtain our funds to live on, you have the answer of how we should gain our means of living. Yet, there are some Scriptures that will certainly steer any honest person away from gambling. Notice these Scriptures: *“Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase... Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom... A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent... He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him... But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition”* (Proverbs 13:11, Proverbs 23:4, Proverbs 28:20, Proverbs 28:22, and I Timothy 6:9).

Winning the lottery is all about getting rich. Why would you want to be rich when it is more difficult, though not impossible, to be saved while being rich (Matthew 19:16-26)? Why would you want to be rich when you learn that those riches are not durable (Proverbs 23:5) or trustworthy (Psalms 49:6-8)? Simply put, don't set your heart upon riches (Psalms 62:10), for where your treasure is your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19-21).

Conclusion

Whether it is a scratch off ticket or the regular lottery ticket, steer clear from all that leads one to gamble in this manner. There is no Scriptural authority or spiritual wisdom in such an endeavor. No, I cannot show you a Scripture that explicitly condemns those who play the lottery. That being said, I cannot show you a Scripture that explicitly says you cannot beat a stupid person with a baseball bat either. What we must admit is that all that leads one to play the lottery is wrong. Thus, if the urge strikes in you to gamble in this or other ways, find out what spiritual problem has led you down that dark path and correct it (Psalms 119:59).